

IN THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (*Currently Amended*) An address recognition apparatus for recognizing an address written on a ~~paper~~ sheet of paper, comprising:

input means for receiving an image of the written address and transforming the image into computer-processable digital data;

character recognizing means for recognizing a word string in the digital data
~~containing an address word string written on the paper sheet in the~~ on a unit of character basis;

word extracting means for extracting characters recognized by said the character recognizing means in the on a unit of word basis;

an address word string dictionary for storing a plurality of first word strings each constructing an address in which a word arrangement order is determined; and

address word string recognizing means having executable instructions for:

(a) collating a second word string including a plurality of words extracted by said word extracting means and the first various word strings in said address word string dictionary,

(b) determining words of the second word string respectively corresponding to [[.]] the words of the first word string based on similarities between the words of the first word string and the words of the second word string,

(c) making evaluation for evaluating each of the first word strings based on the number of words between the words of the second word string thus determined and the similarities between the words of the first word string and the words of the second word string determined, and

(d) recognizing one of the first word strings as the address word string;
and

(e) outputting the recognized first word string as the address word string representing the written address.

2. (*Currently Amended*) An address recognition apparatus for recognizing an address written on a paper sheet of paper, comprising:

an input device configured to receive a scanned image of the written address and transforming the image into computer-processable digital data;

a character recognizing means for recognizing section configured to recognize a word string in the digital data containing an address word string written on the paper sheet in the unit of on a unit character basis;

a word extracting means for extracting section configured to extract characters recognized by said the character recognizing section means in the on a unit of word basis;

an address word string dictionary for previously storing configured to previously store a plurality of first word strings each constructing an address in which a word arrangement order is determined; and

an address word string recognizing means section configured with executable instructions to:

(a) for collating collate a second word string including a plurality of words extracted by said the word extracting means section and the first various word strings in said the address word string dictionary,

(b) determining determine words of the second word string respectively corresponding to the words of the first word string based on the word arrangement order and similarities between the words of the first word string and the words of the second word string,

(c) making evaluation for evaluate each of the first word strings based on the number of words between the respective words in the second word string thus determined and the similarities between the words of the first word string and the words of the second word string determined, and

(d) recognizing recognize one of the first word strings as the address word string, and

(e) output the recognized first word string as the address word string
representing the written address.